

CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

"HOW BEAUTIFUL UPON THE MOUNTAINS, ARE THE FEET OF HIM THAT BRINGETH GOOD TIDINGS, THAT PUBLISHETH PEACE."—Isa. lli, 7.

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A DISCOURSE,

*Delivered in the Orchard-street Church, N. Y.
on Sunday morning, August 5th, in relation to
the late public Fast, recommended by the Common
Council.*

By T. J. SAWYER.

My Christian Friends—It may not be improper, and perhaps not unnecessary, for me this morning to present some of the reasons, why I did not regard the recommendation of our Common Council in relation to a public fast observed last Friday. I feel myself under the higher obligations to do this, because I am ^{fully} aware that many honest christians will condemn this congregation as *irreligious, unwilling to acknowledge God in the calamitous dispensations of his providence, and as indifferent to the sufferings of our race.*

With all good citizens, we acknowledge the general necessity and individual duty of obedience to civil rulers, so far as they possess the constitutional right of making, and consequently of enforcing laws, and no farther. The civil magistrate possesses no inherent powers. All the authority he is permitted to exercise is the result of delegation. The question arises, then, Is the Common Council of the City of New-York, possessed of the authority, in other words, has the community ever delegated to them the power to dictate or advise in matters of religion? If so, then we have in our own country, something of that *ideal good* which has for ages been the inheritance and curse of Christianity, a union of Church and State. This however will not be granted. Our rulers are only civil magistrates, and possess no constitutional authority to legislate on any thing pertaining to religion, farther than to secure every citizen in the free expression of his religious opinions and the practice of his religious observances, not inconsistent with the rights of others. To us, therefore, it appears obvious, that any attempt of our Common Council, or any other public ministers, to direct in affairs of a religious nature, is a transgression of their delegated powers and *ought not to be obeyed*.

In reviewing the history of this subject for the last few weeks we are surprised at the repeated attempts of some religionists to secure the influence of public authority in the appointment of a day of general fasting and prayer. We see the Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church, almost on the first rumor of the prevailing epidemic in America, humbly petitioning the Common Council of our city, for the appointment or recommendation of a day of humiliation and prayer, that God would be pleased to avert the threatened calamity from our city and country. If public prayers are thought to be availling, then surely was the time to have offered up our petitions to the throne of Heaven. Then was the time to have humbled ourselves before God, to have confessed our sins, and turned away from our unrighteousness. Then the blight of the pestilence had not fallen on us, but the destroying angel seemed to wait, if so be the people of this Nineveh would hear and return, that he should not smite. But how is the petition of this respected prelate treated? The subject is candidly but freely discussed and the Bishop and the public are informed that the Common Council is a civil body possessing temporal and not spiritual powers, and that they

have no right to interfere in any way with the religious duties of the community. I cannot but believe that these opinions were rigorously just. However much as private individuals the members of the Corporation might desire the humiliation, penitence, and reformation of the people, as civil magistrates they had no right to express that desire by any act whatever that could be construed into a transgression of their delegated powers. They had no right to forbid, or discountenance; appoint, or recommend a day of fasting and prayer. Much about the same time, we see some leaders in the four remaining evangelical and most popular sects, the Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, and the Reformed Dutch, uniting in a petition to the Governor of the state, beseeching him in prospect of the approaching Cholera, to proclaim a day of public fasting and prayer throughout the state. It seems that a petition from the Bishop of the Episcopal Church was likewise simultaneously before the Executive. With all becoming deference and respect to these religious teachers, the Governor reminds them of a fact which appears to have been forgotten, that he was a *civil magistrate*, and not a *minister of religion*, and consequently that he could not pervert his authority from its legitimate exercise, to any interference with what he *officially* had no concern.

I should not forget in this connexion to mention, that even in the General Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church, a special committee was appointed to correspond with other denominations and "with the civil authorities of the land," on the subject of a fast, and that in consequence thereof the President of the United States was appealed to in behalf of a measure that seemed to lay so near the heart of many christians in our community. The Chief Executive however felt that his official duty was prescribed in the Constitution, and that he could not comply with their wishes without transcending his limits, and "feeling that he might in some degree disturb the security which religion now enjoys in this country, in its complete separation from the political concerns of the General Government."

We could have supposed a fair trial had now been made to obtain the countenance of civil authority for ~~such~~ merely religious, and we might have imagined that their uniform want of success would have taught them a salutary lesson. And here I cannot but remark, that the five evangelical sects, and they alone, were concerned in these petitions. It is a singular fact and deserves attention. We do not accuse these sects of wishing a greater connexion between the civil and religious powers. They have been suspected of indulging such wishes it is true, but suspicions so unfriendly to their characters ought not to be entertained upon slight and questionable grounds.

We believe it would be found upon examination of the subject, that public fasts, thanksgivings and the like, appointed by civil authority, are the result of a union, in principle at least, of Church and State. In the broadest sense they are so even in our own country, however little it may generally be suspected. In England the people enjoy the privileges of an Established Religion. There men may be pious by law. Fasts and other public services of an extraordinary character, are appointed by authority of

the King, who is head of the Church, and who of course unites in his own person the highest civil and religious power. Similar services in this country owe their origin to the example of the mother country. Even to New-England, so much celebrated as the sanctuary of the persecuted pilgrims, the same observation applies. We have heard much—who indeed in America can be ignorant?—of the pilgrim fathers. Their praise has been sung—and their memories preserved—and their virtues eulogized, till descendants have grown vain of their ancestry and are proud to be called children of the pilgrims. The pilgrims! They have been styled the “apostles of religious liberty.” It is quite true, that they manfully resisted in their native land, the encroachments of civil power over the more sacred empire of conscience, and, rather than suffer, fled from the reach of religious despotism. It is also quite as true, that with all their pretensions, they knew little of religious liberty. Their history will show, that they knew well how to persecute—to disfranchise all who did not belong to *their* Church—to whip Baptists to exile and hang Quakers—to condemn and execute witches. And are such persons to be regarded as the apostles of religious liberty? Yet it is from these too sainted pilgrims we received, if I am not mistaken, the custom of fasts and thanksgivings appointed by civil authority. Throughout New-England precedent has made it almost a law of the land, that the Governor of the several states should annually set apart a day for public humiliation, fasting and prayer, and another for general thanksgiving. This precedent had its origin among those who believed that an individual, no matter how enlightened his mind, or correct his life, ought to exercise none of the functions and enjoy none of the privileges of a citizen, unless he belonged to what was by themselves regarded as the true Church. In their opinion, the civil magistrate was clothed with a species of religious power, and he who dared to disregard a day set apart by him for any religious services, not only opposed the authority of the state, but the ordinance of Heaven. I do not urge these circumstances as high disparagement to the pilgrims and their early descendants. They had not been educated in a school which could give them very enlarged and generous views of either civil or religious liberty. It was not to be expected of them. But because our fathers, in ages gone by, entertained unworthy notions of human rights, must we forever bow in acquiescence to their example, and wear in manhood the swaddling-bands which their infancy could not break? Be this as it may, I believe the proposition susceptible of the clearest proof that wherever religious services are appointed by civil authority, there is to a degree a virtual union of Church and State.

I cannot but think therefore, that our Common Council in recommending a day of public humiliation and prayer, stepped over the bounds prescribed by the Constitution, and trespassed on a field for which they are not qualified by their office, and perhaps not by their characters. A man may be a good public officer and yet a very poor christian, or indeed no christian at all. It is not my business to judge the functionaries of the city. It is not theirs to direct me in the performance of my religious duties. As men I would love their virtues, as christians I would

respect their piety and imitate their good example, but as religious legislators or advisers in their civil capacity, I know them not. If the Common Council have a right to appoint or recommend one day for religious services, they have an equal right to recommend two, twenty or fifty in a year. If they have a right to recommend a day of *fasting*, they have a right also to recommend a day of *thanksgiving*—of *moral instruction*—of *doctrinal exposition*—of any thing and every thing that pertains to religion. If they have a right to recommend a day of *fasting* and prayer, they have an equal right to recommend the manner of its observance. They may recommend how, and how long we shall fast—they may recommend how many times we shall pray and what we shall pray for. If they can recommend one thing that we should especially desire, they may recommend others also. In fine, they may recommend what we may believe and what we may preach. Their recommendation, if it be valid in one instance, may as well extend to others, and thus embrace the whole subject of religion. And it should not be forgotten, that if the Common Council have power to advise us to be religious, they have also the same power to advise us to be irreligious. If they can advise us to observe fast day, they can also advise us not to observe Sunday. If they can advise us to pray, they can with the same authority advise us not to pray at all. For my own part, and I think I speak the sentiments of this congregation, I am not willing thus to deliver up to any man or set of men on earth, my religious privileges. I have been taught to call no man Master, for one is my Master, even Jesus Christ. If then I am his disciple and freeman, I can be no man's servant. I bow in religion to no human authority. I recognize no pope—no bishops, as the successors of Christ and his inspired apostles. I take the Bible as my Counsellor and Guide. If I neglect to fast and pray as that recommends, the criminality is my own and I must answer it at the tribunal of my Judge.

I was the more disposed to disregard the recommendation of the Common Council by considerations of a less general nature than those upon which I have been insisting. I am conscientiously opposed to any interference of civil authority in affairs of religion, and my convictions of its utter impropriety are strengthened by a review of the proceedings of our city government for the past few weeks. I cannot but feel that in the course the Common Council has pursued there is something like marked disrespect shown to the Episcopal Church and especially its Bishop, or else a temporizing spirit and a time-serving policy. What single circumstance, let me ask, had transpired to render constitutional or appropriate the recommendation of a day of *humiliation* and *prayer* in July which did not exist in June? If the Common Council possessed not the power thus to recommend in June, where was it obtained in July? Could the example of the Governor of the state and the President of the United States, have changed their views of power and duty? How then shall we account for an act directly opposed to an opinion deliberately formed and expressed by themselves only four weeks before? The cholera is, and for the last twelve days has been slowly but evidently passing away. If our civil rulers must claim even *advisory* powers in religion, they should, to merit public confidence, be ever faithful in their responsible calling. The prayers of God's people should not, for days and weeks, be restrained through their criminal neglect, while "the pestilence walketh in darkness," and "destruction wasteth at noon-day," until the vial of Divine wrath is nearly spent, and the Destroying Angel is gathering his shafts to be away. No, they should not delay, like the unjust judge in the parable, until wear-

ed by "continual coming," they must at last grant to importunity what they would not bestow on principle.

It may be said, as it has been again and again, in vindication of the measure we are contemplating, that a fast day was not appointed, but only recommended by the Common Council. True; but what influence, let me ask, was this recommendation intended and expected to exert? All the influence that any measure in their power could exert. It was asked because the petitioners believed it would carry *authority* with it. It was granted by the Common Council with the same expectation. If not, why was it so perseveringly sought, and why granted? Shall we accuse intelligent christians and the honorable Corporation with solemn trifling? And what else could it be, to recommend a day of public *humiliation* and *prayer*, without meaning and expecting it to be observed? No penalty was attached to the recommendation, it is true, as would have been to a constitutional decree. Still in the language of the Governor, "although a proclamation does not issue as a command, yet the design of proclaiming it in an official character, is to give the influence of a mandate to an unauthorized act."

There is one circumstance which I regret to mention, but which should not be forgotten, as it has important bearings upon this subject, and cannot but present it in a somewhat different light. I allude to a fast observed by many Churches in the city at the very commencement of the Cholera here. This fast was appointed by the ministers of religion, as all services of the kind should be, and was observed, I know not how extensively, by those whose prayers alone are generally believed to be availing at the throne of God. From some cause this christian fast was thought insufficient, even by those who kept it, and a civil fast was asked to be proclaimed by authority. Shall we regard this as a humiliation of religion, or must we believe prayers at such a season unacceptable to God if not recommended by the rulers of the land? For myself I must confess it is not pleasing to behold Christianity, the daughter of Heaven, thus forgetting her divine origin, and stooping like a mendicant to crave a boon from the hand of mere worldly Power—worldly Power, who during the years of her infancy was an inveterate foe, and whose caresses in after ages have proved a thousand times more dangerous to her interests and well being than the ten persecutions! To my mind too, there is something humiliating in professed ministers of a heavenly religion, bowing with child-like submission to the virtual dictation of civil rulers. But this idea of humiliation is heightened, when we behold these ministers anxiously and perseveringly soliciting the very dictation to which they bow. I regret to see

Christian teachers thus openly acknowledging their inability to direct even in the affairs of religion to which they are devoted, and asking of the public authorities to give sanction to their own pious wishes. Ministers of religion are by the Constitution of the state excluded from all participation in public office. By a parity of reasoning, public officers are equally excluded from all interference in the concerns of religion. And for the Common Council, or the Governor of the state, graciously to inform ministers of religion when they may pray, and for what they may pray, is no greater transgression of their constitutional powers, than it would be for the ministers of religion, as graciously to inform the Common Council when they might hold a session, and what business they might transact, or to direct the Executive in the performance of his official duties. The truth is, our temporal and spiritual affairs are most widely separated, as their visible distinctions evidently demand. "The duties of the first," to use the language of the state Executive, "require to be prescribed by

law, and enforced by power; those of the latter, are recognized by conscience and require no enforcement which does not operate directly on the will."

I shall probably be asked, if I do not acknowledge the christian duties of *humiliation* and *prayer*? Most fully; but I acknowledge them only as christian duties; and as a christian I have been taught to be ever humble and penitent in view of my sins, and to pray "always," to "pray without ceasing." I understand it to be the christian's duty to bear always about with him the lively remembrance, that he is the child of God, who has the highest claims upon the affections of his heart and the labor of his hands; that the divine government is over him and all men, alike in *weal* and *woe*; that he is dependant upon Heaven for life and all life's blessings, and finally, that whether living or dying he is God's. I understand it to be the christian's duty to pray with a humble, resigned, and confiding heart, to the Universal Father, "for all men," not for one hour, or one day only, but every day, constantly. We enjoy, besides, one day in seven set apart as a day of rest, affording happy and convenient seasons, in common with our friends, to humble ourselves before our Maker, to acknowledge our unworthiness, to gain religious instruction, to give life to our piety, strength to our faith, and enlargement and assurance to our hopes. In our weekly convocation here, these vacant seats, the melancholy associations with which our hearts are thronged, would not suffer us to forget that death is stalking, with uncommon terror, through our half depopulated city. Amidst the duties of the week, the dejection that sits on almost every countenance, the startling intelligence that a friend or acquaintance has gone suddenly down to the grave, the frequent bearse, all tell us that we live surrounded by sufferings and death. And the prayer unadvised would go up in all its native sincerity and fervency to the great Giver of all good. In such circumstances the christian cannot but pray. He needs not the recommendation of civil authority. There is a law in his own bosom stronger than any human enactment, and to that he bows as the voice of God.

Again I shall be asked, if I do not believe in the propriety and duty of public fasts? Most religiously. But I believe in the duty of such fasts only as are acknowledged and enjoined in the volume of *Revelation*. This will lead me to call your attention for a moment to the word of God as recorded in *Isaiah lviii, 6, 7*.

Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

In all ages of the world, as far as we possess its religious history, man has been strongly inclined to rest satisfied in the mere performance of rites and ceremonies, to feel that his chief duty consisted in the little acts of devotion, and to assure himself of acceptance with God, when he had been the round of outward observances prescribed by his religion. It was not the Pharisee alone that tithe mint, and anise, and cummin, and neglected the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and fidelity. The heathen, both in ancient and modern times, have been distinguished for the same conduct. And we have too much reason to fear that the spirit still lives even in Christendom, and is fostered in many a heart that professes to love and obey the religion of Jesus. The Jews, during some periods of their history, had adopted such sentiments in their national capacity. It was at one of these seasons that *Isaiah* performed the duties of his prophetic ministry. They were careful in the performance of their religious rites—they observed every fast. They professed to take

"delight in approaching unto God," they sought him "daily, as a nation that did righteousness," yet, they are represented by inspiration as exclaiming, "Wherefore have we fasted, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge?" To which the Lord replies, "Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labors. Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness; ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord?" Then follows the text quoted above.

It cannot but be obvious that the fast of the Jews here represented is a perfect contrast to the fast acceptable to the Lord. The latter was not the service of a day. It did not consist in performance of religious rites, in making sad the countenance, in disfiguring the face, in bowing down the head like a bulrush, in afflicting the soul—in short, it did not consist in appearing unto men to fast. It was of a far higher and holier character, partook more largely of the spirit of that beneficent Being by whom it was enjoined and manifested strongly and beautifully the charitable tendency of all the divine requirements. It was a fast of humanity, of benevolent action. Its genuine spirit was found in doing good.

How far ought we to expect in answer to our prayers the immediate interposition of God, in the removal of evils merely natural, or resulting from natural causes? is a question which might profitably employ a moment's attention. It is by no means denying the efficacy of prayer to believe that God requires some labors at our own hands instead of conferring ordinary blessings without human efforts. In the affairs of this life our well-being depends to some degree on a due improvement of the means of existence and happiness committed to our trust. It would evidently be an abuse of prayer to expect through its instrumentality that the husbandman would reap a harvest, where he sowed no seed. But would that be a greater abuse than it is to expect health, through its power, either to ourselves or others without adopting the proper measures to secure it? I acknowledge that except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh in vain. But at the same time expectations of his miraculous interposition, would be unjustifiable, were men to cease all their exertions for its safety. The truth, as it appears to me, is, we have indispensable duties to perform, and in the performance of these duties we may confidently anticipate the aid and blessing of God. The husbandman must sow, if he would expect to reap—the sick must make use of the means which the kindness of providence has furnished, if they would hope to recover. Such is the established order of nature. Let us apply these remarks to the subject before us. The fast of the Lord consists not alone in humiliation and prayer. It requires active exertions to do good. Had then our Common Council done all that was in their power to stay the pestilence—had they rigorously executed all laws designed to secure the public health of the city—had they caused our city to be thoroughly and constantly cleansed—had they visited the abodes of misery and rendered the inmates comfortable—had they removed the wretched victims of dissipation and licentiousness from their dens of filth, where they congregate like reptiles, to a purer atmosphere—had they remembered the industrious and virtuous poor, who in the public distress, are thrown out of employment, and denied the small pittance their daily labors once afforded them—had they, with the public treasury, gone

out in the performance of their official duties, and kept a *fast*, emphatically, *of the Lord*—then well might they have anticipated the divine blessing.

There are many topics, connected with this subject upon which I would gladly insist, but I find myself trespassing upon your patience. The present dispensation of God's providence is fraught with interest as well as terror, and it will hereafter afford, should my life be spared, various subjects for our mutual consideration. Particularly will it impress upon our minds the necessity for more efficient exertions in behalf of the cause of temperance, virtue and religion.

The present is a season that is calculated to call into action all the better principles and sympathies of our nature. We are in a world of mingled joys and sorrows, and well would it be for us, could we find our happiness, as much as our duty, in relieving the sufferings of others. "To do good and to communicate," says an inspired apostle, "forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Remember that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." Finally, in closing, permit me once more to call your attention to our text, and enjoin upon you and myself the great duty of fasting as thereby instructed. Let us cultivate a spirit of expansive charity. Let us go out in the broad sunlight of christian benevolence and engage in the genuine works of christian enterprise. Let us be monitors to the unwary, and guides to the simple-hearted and confiding youth. Let us snatch the intoxicating bowl from the lip of revelry, and withdraw the misguided from the haunts of vice, and endeavor to win back the licentious to a love and practice of virtue. Let us wipe the tear from the widow's eye, and bring the orphan once more to a father's house. Let us breathe the consolations of religion in the ear of the mourner, and bind up the broken heart, and assuage the sorrows we cannot heal. In the sentiment of inspiration, let us loose the bands of wickedness, and undo the heavy burdens, and let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke. Let us deal our bread to the hungry, and bring the poor that are cast out to our house; when we see the naked let us cover him, and hide not ourselves from our own flesh. Then shall our light break forth as the morning and our *health* shall spring forth speedily. Then shall we fast a fast acceptable to the Lord, and make our voice to be heard on high. Then, having done our duty to ourselves and our fellow men, we may well feel an assurance in the benediction of God, and with humble resignation trust to the higher wisdom and greater goodness of the Almighty.

FROM THE BOSTON TRUMPET. CHRISTIAN FIRMNESS.

Firmness is a virtue that will be of vast importance to us throughout life, and it is a virtue that we should earnestly strive to acquire. In every situation in life there are seasons in which it will be necessary for us to call this into action, in which we shall need its assistance. Oftentimes unexpected misfortunes overtake us, when we are little prepared to meet them, and then we feel the want of its aid; then we are sensible of the advantages of a firm, unwavering, unbending mind, that can rise above the storm and the tempest of earthly evils, and bear us on to the calm and tranquil sea of resignation. In the possession of this virtue we have acquired treasures which cannot be derived from any other source, treasures which the world can never give, can never take away. It will be an unfailing support throughout the changing scenes of life, it will sustain us, aye more, it will cheer us under all the trials and afflictions with which it may be our lot to meet in the pilgrimage of human existence. It will bright-

en our dearest hopes, it will realize our fondest expectations, and it will shed a calm and peaceful radiance over the prospect before us. And is it not then a most desirable virtue, should we not seek for it as for silver, or an hid treasure? O, yes. And how are we to make ourselves masters of this invaluable possession? Let us turn to Revelation and to reason for an answer.

Our great Master when teaching his disciples that they should have full faith in the providence of God, thus addresses them: "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows." Here the Savior assures us that not even a sparrow falls without the knowledge of our Father, and as we are of more value than many sparrows, of course that nothing can happen unto us without his knowledge and consent. Ought not this truth to inspire us with the most entire confidence in God? Most certainly; and if we have but full faith in this assurance of the Savior, whatever of misfortune, whatever of grief or woe, shall come upon us, we shall be enabled to bear up under it with unyielding firmness, resting fully satisfied that nothing of these afflictions has happened to us without the permission of our Father, and fully trusting that the Judge of all the earth will do right. The perfect care that God manifests for us is shown by these words, "the very hairs of your head are all numbered." O, how cheering to the wounded spirit to know that the great Father of all is so constantly mindful of us, to know that whatever be our lot, whether it be joyous or grievous, whether it be in wealth or in poverty, in health or in sickness, God is with us. O, I would not part with the joy, the pure, unsullied bliss that this faith in the overruling providence of my Father in heaven affords me, not for ten thousand worlds, ten thousand times more fair.

That God takes this perfect care of all his children is manifest from Revelation, nature and experience. The scriptures assure us that "God is good unto all, and his tender mercies are over all his works." This sublime and heart cheering truth is supported by the evidence that the volume of Nature affords, for no rational being can look forth upon the boundless fields of creation, and behold the variety, the beauty, the harmony and design herein displayed, and not exclaim in the fulness of a heart overflowing with wonder, admiration and gratitude, the Lord hath done it—"Praise him for his wonderful works, and for his loving kindness unto the children of men." And when again, we remember that in God we live, and move, and have our being, that from the unfailing and inexhaustible fount of his mercy, flow all the blessings of life, are we not constrained to say, "The Lord is good, he openeth his hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing." And when we have so much evidence, so much of irrefutable proof that our Father careth continually for us, should we not remain firm under every vicissitude of life? Should we not, let our portion be what it may, adopt this language, "it is the Lord, let him do as seemeth him good?"—Yes, these should ever be our feelings, and this firmness of mind can only be acquired by placing the most perfect confidence in the infinite wisdom and goodness of God, by trusting unhesitatingly, and without reserve, that be our lot in joy or sorrow, he hath directed it wisely and for the best, that, "whatever is, is right." Then shall we be enabled with the Son of the Most High to exclaim in the fulness of our faith—"Father not my will, but thine be done." This is true christian firmness, and this alone will support and sustain us through the changing scenes of life, and give us a foretaste of those joys which are at God's right hand forever more. T. B. T.

CHRISTIAN FAITH.—AN EXTRACT.

Would you know the value of faith to the bereaved? Go, and follow a corpse to the grave. See the body deposited there, and hear the earth thrown in upon all that remains of your friend. Return now, if you will, and brood over the lesson which your senses have given you, and derive from it what consolation you can. You have learned nothing but an unconsoling fact. No voice of comfort issues from the tomb. All is still there, and blank, and lifeless, and has been so for ages. You see nothing but bodies dissolving and successively mingling with the clods which cover them, the grass growing over the spot, and the trees waving in sullen majesty over this region of eternal silence. And what is there more? Nothing.—Come, Faith, and people these deserts! Come, and reanimate these regions of forgetfulness! Mothers! take again your children to your arms, for they are living. Sons! your aged parents are coming forth in the vigor of regenerated years. Friends! behold, your dearest connexions are waiting to embrace you. The tombs are burst. Generations long since in slumbers are awakening. They are coming from the east and the west, from the north and the south, to constitute the community of the blessed.

But it is not in the loss of friends alone, that faith furnishes consolations which are inestimable. With a man of faith not an affliction is lost, not a change is unimproved. He studies even his own history with pleasure, and finds it full of instruction. The dark passages of his life are illuminated with hope; and he sees, that although he has passed through many dreary defiles, yet they have opened at last into brighter regions of existence. He recalls, with a species of wondering gratitude, periods of his life when all its events seemed to conspire against him. Hemmed in by straitened circumstances, wearied with repeated blows of unexpected misfortunes, and exhausted with the painful anticipation of more, he recollects years, when the ordinary love of life could not have retained him in the world. Many a time he might have wished to lay down his being in disgust, had not something more than the senses provide us with, kept up the elasticity of his mind. He yet lives, and has found that light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. The man of faith discovers some gracious purpose in every combination of circumstances. Wherever he finds himself, he knows that he has a destination—he has, therefore, a duty. Every event has, in his eye, a tendency and an aim. Nothing is accidental, nothing without purpose, nothing unattended with benevolent consequences. He is poor—perhaps his plans have been defeated—he finds it difficult to provide for the exigencies of life—sickness is permitted to invade the quiet of his household—long confinement imprisons his activity, and cuts short the exertions on which so many depend—something apparently unlucky mars his best plans—new failures and embarrassments among his friends present themselves, and throw additional obstruction in his way—the world look on and say, all these things are against him. Some wait coolly for the hour when he shall sink under the complicated embarrassments of his cruel fortune. Others, of a kinder spirit, regard him with compassion, and wonder how he can sustain such a variety of woe. A few there are, a very few, I fear, who can understand something of the serenity of his mind, and comprehend something of the nature of his fortitude. There are those, whose sympathetic pity can read and interpret the characters of resignation on his brow. There are those, in fine, who have felt the influence of faith.

In this influence there is nothing mysterious, nothing romantic, nothing of which the highest reason may be ashamed. It shows the Chris-

tian his God, in all the mild majesty of his parental character. It shows you God, disposing in still and benevolent wisdom the events of every individual's life, pressing the pious spirit with the weight of calamity to increase the elasticity of the mind, producing characters of unexpected worth by unexpected misfortune, invigorating certain virtues by peculiar probations, thus breaking the fetters which bind us to temporal things, and

"From seeming evil still educing good,
And better thence again, and better still,
In infinite progression."

When the sun of the believer's hopes, according to common calculations, is set, to the eye of faith it is still visible. When much of the rest of the world is in darkness, the high ground of faith is illuminated with the brightness of religious consolation.

MUTABILITY OF EARTHLY THINGS.

The material world is continually changing. Nothing of which we have any positive knowledge is exempt from change and decay. The system of the Universe, we are informed by astronomers, is subject to a continual imperceptible variation or change. Our earth, it is said, travels not the same path she did two centuries ago. The magnetic needle points not as it once did.

But let us look at nations, empires and states. They too are continually changing. Nations rise, have their infancy, manhood and old age; then die, and are known no more but in the history of past times. The same is true of empires and states. They imperceptibly rise to the height of their greatness and grandeur, then decompose and fly off to form parts of others. But the religious no less than the political world has met with the same fate. The Pagan, Jewish, Christian and Mahometan religions have, each in their turn, had their rise and division into jarring and discordant sects; and these sects after passing through the different stages of youth, manhood and old age, have been dissolved and absorbed by surrounding bodies.

What has been may be again. And an attentive perusal of the history of past ages, especially the history of the Church, will suffice, we should think, to make one modest and unassuming. At least it ought to teach us that knowledge, the most important of all, a knowledge of ourselves. The man who has a knowledge of himself, knows that he is an ever varying creature; that the man who is a friend to-day, to-morrow may be an enemy; and that from a thousand ills which poor human life is heir to, we may pursue a course as far removed from that we had marked out for ourselves, as the east is distant from the west.

Amidst all this change and decay to whom shall we look? Every thing around us is mutable. Our friends who a few days ago were so cheerful and gay, are now numbered with the silent dead. A bosom companion has, perhaps, been taken from us. For something to rest our hopes upon we must go to the "Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." He it is that never changes. He is the "High and the lofty One that inhabitteth eternity." We can when contemplating on this Being, exclaim with the monarch of Israel, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or even thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God." He equally befriends the whole human family, is our Father and our God, and one who, when all others shall have forsaken us, will remain immutably the same. Let all put their trust in him while journeying through this mutable world. He will be our stay and support both in prosperity and adversity, in sickness, and in death, when His comfort and friendly aid will be most needed. The man

who looks aright on the mutable world, and feels right towards his Maker and fellow men, is a happy individual. And though the world is continually changing, yet he is safe and happy in the belief that he is continually regarded by Him who is immutable in his love. Kind reader, whoever you are, endeavor to bring thyself into this good frame of mind, and then where you shall most realize the *mutability of earthly things*, you shall have a stay and support that is immutable, eternal in the heavens and fadeth not away.—*Uni. Watchman.*

AFFECTING INCIDENT.

One of the most affecting incidents which memory records, occurred while returning from a late summer excursion on the lakes. About the middle of August there arrived at Saratoga Springs, from the south, a young and interesting couple; their equipage and attendant be-spoke affluence, and their manners the high rank in society to which they belonged. But they came not in pursuit of pleasure—to revel for a day in the gay region of fashion. They came in the sadness of their hearts, to bear to a more salubrious clime the first blossom of their hopes, an only child, who like a delicate flower, had drooped beneath too ardent a sunbeam. From a blooming infant, with the curve of health in every limb, and the sparkle of joy in every glance, he had become a mere shadow—but it was a lovely one; his cheek had lost its bloom, and his eye its brilliancy; but there was a mild serenity on his pure brow, a soft smile on his sweet lips, as he looked up to his young mother in his appealing helplessness, which was more touching to the heart than the richest glow of health. He was two years old; already had he bounded from his nurse's arms with the playful frolic of an innocent lamb; already had he begun to tread with a firmer step, and lisp the names most dear to a parent, when disease pressed its most paralyzing seal upon his frame, and chilled the warm current of his heart.

I never shall forget the hour I last beheld that child; it was a bright balmy evening, the mild breeze scarcely stirred the trestled foliage of the woodbines and roses that shadowed the terrace of Congress Hall; hither came the devoted parents with their devoted charge, who was pressed by the heat of the rooms. A striking change was visible in his face, as he lay reclined upon the bosom of his mother. There was a slight convulsion in his limbs, a fixedness in his gaze, which spoke of approaching death. The physicians had prepared the father for the melancholy event, who in a voice where manly firmness struggled in vain with the emotions of a parent, entreated that the child might be conveyed again to the couch. He is easier here, said the mother, in a low voice—see! he is inclined to sleep. The physician laid his hand on the brow of the child, and upon his breast, and the expression of his countenance told too truly that the shaft of *death was sped!* With an affectionate firmness which she could not resist, he took him from the embrace of his mother, while the agonized father, clasping her hands, whispered, "our boy is gone forever."

This event, though expected, was too great a shock for her frame to support, and she was conveyed in a state of insensibility to her apartment. I saw them no more.

With regard to the sharpest and most melting sorrow, that which arises from the loss of those whom we have loved with tenderness, it may be observed, that friendship between mortals can be contracted on no other terms, than that one must some time mourn for the other's death: And this grief will always yield to the survivor one consolation proportionate to his affliction; for the pain, whatever it be, that he himself feels, his friend has escaped.—*Johnson.*

CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

EDITED BY T. J. SAWYER AND F. PRICE.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 18, 1832.

NOTICE.

Services for the present will be attended in the Orchard-street Church, at the usual hour in the morning, and at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. The evening service will be dispensed with.

DOGMATISM NOT ARGUMENT.

"WHAT MEN WOULD DO IF THEY COULD.

Every one who reads his bible, knows that it teaches this awful truth, that "the wicked shall be turned into hell," and that those who do not obey the word of God, shall at the day of judgment, go away into everlasting punishment, prepared for the devil and his angels. The very idea of the gospel is, that it offers deliverance from endless misery to those only who will comply with its terms. No man can preach the gospel, who does not preach the doctrine, "He that believeth not shall be damned." And it is the duty of every faithful Christian to use every possible motive to "persuade men" to become holy, and "flee from the wrath to come." It is indispensable that we should use "the terrors of the Lord" for this purpose, as well as his "exceeding great and precious promises." But wherever this is done, faithfully and with effect, it does not fail to excite the wrath of the wicked. We see, even in this land, "what they would do if they could," in the following extract of a speech made over the bottle, on the 4th of July last, by a Universalist preacher, and printed with approbation, in a newspaper published in Connecticut."—*N. Y. Evangelist.*

REMARKS.

We do not see the necessity on the part of Br. Leavitt, of thus associating "a Universalist preacher," and "the bottle." Shall we award him the praise of noble and generous motives? And it may not be amiss to suggest to Br. Leavitt that the individual, whom he would apparently disparage, *probably has as little to do with the bottle as himself.* With the sentiments which that individual expressed on the occasion alluded to, we have nothing to do. There are some in the community, who, in view of the multiplied cases of insanity and suicide which have marked the progress of revivals the year past, believe that the subject demands legal interference. That opinion, it is well known, is not ours, and we do not feel called upon either to defend, or apologize for it. But we would ask Br. Leavitt, as a candid man and an honest christian, to answer us two or three questions. 1. Did Jesus Christ and his inspired apostles preach the truth in the best manner? It will be said, most undoubtedly he did. 2. Can you refer to a single instance, in the whole history of the New Testament, in which an individual was driven by their preaching to despair, *insanity*, and *suicide*? We presume not, no not even Judas! 3. Will you then account for the fact that such awful results not unfrequently attend modern revival preaching?

Br. Leavitt tells us in a somewhat dogmatical tone, that "every one who reads his Bible, knows that it teaches this awful truth, that 'the wicked shall be turned into hell.'" If he means by "hell" what we suppose him to, and what is generally meant by our Limitarian friends, a place of *endless misery*, the remark must have

been made without reflection, for Br. Leavitt knows full well, that there are many christians as sincere and who read their Bibles as much as others, who do not believe it teaches "this awful truth." This passage, "the wicked shall be turned into hell," (Psalm ix, 17,) has long been a subject of reflection, and we now offer Br. Leavitt the trifling premium of \$25, if he will prove to the satisfaction of three competent judges that the word *hell* here means, a place or state of *endless misery*. And lest he should think us unfair, we will waive all claim even to one Universalist judge, to which as offerer we should be justly entitled, and will mention the Rev. Dr. Spring of this city, the Rev. Dr. Allen of Maine, and the Rev. Professor Stuart, of Andover, as gentlemen competent to decide on the subject. Besides paying the above sum to Br. Leavitt, when awarded by the judges, we promise to publish the argument in the Christian Messenger.

"The very idea of the gospel is," says Br. Leavitt, "that it offers deliverance from endless misery to those who will comply with its terms." This very modest assertion we most fully and unequivocally deny. And we challenge Br. Leavitt to put his finger on *one single passage of Scripture*, which plainly asserts, or by any just exposition can be made to prove, that the gospel offers deliverance from *endless misery*. We ask for proofs. We know that our Limitarian friends have long affected to regard Universalists and Universalism as unworthy of their notice, but by a reference to some facts stated in our last, Br. Leavitt will see that they may soon be entitled to a hearing. Besides, Universalists do not entertain much confidence in that affected disrespect, and even if they did, it would hardly merit their approbation. If we are in error, in error that will eventually consign us to endless misery, is it *charitable*, is it *christian* to treat us with cold neglect, because, forsooth, we are few in number, or weak in intellect, or dead to virtue?

S.

SCRIPTURE EXPLANATION.

And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. John i, 20, 21.

In the early part of John Baptist's public ministry, the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to inquire of him who he was. That the Jews were at that time, in a state of hourly and feverish expectation of the Messiah's advent, is abundantly proved as well by profane as sacred history; and this fact sufficiently accounts for the solicitude they manifested to become acquainted with the character and claims of the Baptist. The questions which these agents of the Sanhedrim successively asked were the three following. 1. Was he the Christ? 2. Was he Elias? 3. Was he that prophet? To all of which John frankly and fully answered in the negative. In his reply to the first question we find no difficulty. John never pretended to be the Christ, nor was such a claim ever set up for him by his friends and disciples. We shall pass, therefore, to a consideration of a difficulty presented in the second.

"And they asked him what then? Art thou

Elias? And he saith, *I am not.*" The nature of the difficulty here offered will be apparent by a glance at two or three other passages of Scripture. In Matthew xi, 12, 13, 14, we read "And from the days of John Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, *this is Elias which was for to come.*" Again, in Matt. xvii, 10, 11, 12, 13, it is said, "And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come. And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come and restore all things. But I say unto you, *that Elias is come already*, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed: likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake to them of *John the Baptist.*" In these passages, there can be no doubt, Christ taught that John Baptist was Elias who was foretold, and yet John himself most unequivocally assures the Jews that he is not Elias. In attempting to remove what at first sight appears a palpable contradiction, we beg our readers to recollect that Malachi, (iii, 1. and iv, 5.) foretold the coming of Elijah, [Elias, for the words are synonymous] previous to the advent of our Lord, "the messenger of the covenant." They will also bear in mind that the angel who appeared to Zacharias the father of John, in the temple (Luke i, 17,) foretold the promised son as one who should perform the same ministry which Malachi had ages before predicted of Elijah.

Before we condemn John Baptist as ignorant of his own mission and character, or guilty of fraud, in denying that he was Elias, it may be well to inquire more particularly into the import of the question here asked by the agents of the Sanhedrim. An acquaintance with the peculiar notions of the Jews as well as their customs, is indispensable to a correct understanding of many important passages of Scripture. It affords perhaps the only key to an explanation of the one under consideration.

The Jews, or strictly speaking, the Pharisees, a sect which embraced a large proportion of the doctors and nearly all the common people, believed professedly in a resurrection of the dead. But, according to Josephus, this resurrection was nothing more than a Pythagorean metempsychosis, or the transmigration of the soul into another body. We see an instance of this prevailing opinion in Herod, who on hearing the fame of Jesus, said to his servants, (Matt. xiv, 2,) "This is John the Baptist, he is risen from the dead; (that is his soul has re-appeared in another body) and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him." They believed the notoriously wicked were sent, immediately upon death, to a state of endless misery, while the souls of more moderate sinners were permitted to take new bodies, and expiate by the sufferings of another life in this world, the crimes of which they had before been guilty. This will help us to explain John ix, 2, where the disciples inquired of our Lord in relation to a certain blind man, saying "Who did sin, *this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?*" To these

remarks we should add what appears very evident, that the Jews believed the souls of some exceedingly bad men returned to this world again, and took violent possession of the bodies of the living. These were *devils*, or properly *demons*, so frequently spoken of as being cast out, by our Lord and his apostles.

In strict accordance with these general notions, the Jews, had moulded not only their traditions, but likewise conformed their exposition of the Scriptures. They had little, or indeed no idea of an individual appearing "in the spirit and power of Elias," but they looked for the return of the old prophet Elijah in person, and so they explained the language of Malachi. When they asked John Baptist the question, *Art thou Elias?* they asked it with this special meaning. As much as if they had said, *Art thou the old prophet Elijah, once more returned to the earth?* To such a question what answer could John make? Had he answered in the affirmative, he must not only have spoken falsehood, but confirmed the Jews also in their errors. He was the Elias whom prophecy had foretold, but not the Elias of Jewish superstition.

That we are not in error with respect to this opinion of the Jews, and their expectations of Elias' personal re-appearance, is rendered quite certain by the testimony of the author of the Apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus. Although this book is not acknowledged canonical by either Jews or Protestants, its unquestionable antiquity entitles it to credit, so far as it concerns the prevailing practices and opinions of that people at the time of its composition. In chapter xlvi, the first eleven verses of which are devoted to the praise of Elias, the Author says, addressing the prophet himself, "Who wast ordained for reproofs in their times, to pacify the wrath of the Lord's judgment before it break forth into fury, and to turn the hearts of the father unto the son, and to restore the tribes of Jacob." Compare this with Malachi iv, 5, 6, and it will be seen that the author strengthened his opinion by a clear reference to the language of the Prophet, and has left us without a doubt of his own expectation of Elias' personal return, before "the great and dreadful day of the Lord." We may remark in passing, that the Roman Catholic Church receives as canonical the book of Ecclesiasticus, and with it the Jewish tradition on this point, somewhat modified to be sure, the better to correspond with Catholic superstitions. "The fathers and commentators," says Calmet, "have generally explained this passage (Mal. iv, 5,) as relating to the final judgment and the second coming of the Savior; It has been the constant tradition of both the Synagogue and the Church, that the Prophet Elias will appear really, and in person, previous to the end of the world, to oppose Anti-christ, and to recall the Jews to Jesus. The coming of John Baptist, and the destruction of the temple, although quite real in themselves, were only figures of the personal and effective appearance of Elias at the end of the ages [used by Calmet, as synonymous with the end of the world, *monde*] and of the terrible judgment which the Lord will execute against all men who have violated his holy laws and abandoned themselves to crime."

Protestants, however, unite in rejecting both the book of Ecclesiasticus and the *traditions* of the Synagogue and the mother Church. This opinion, therefore, that Elias or Elijah will personally re-appear previous to the end of the world, and the great day of final judgment is abandoned. Here then goes with a groundless tradition one of the strongest passages in proof of endless misery. Mal. iv, 1, has been quoted, time out of mind, as direct testimony not only of a great day of future judgment, but also of the ceaseless torments of the wicked. Mark now. Before the coming of "the day that was to burn as an oven" "the great and dreadful day of the

Lord," God promised to "send Elijah the prophet." If Jesus Christ is to be believed Elijah had already come even in his day. He was no other than John Baptist. The prophecy of Malachi relates not to the consummation of all earthly things, but the subversion of the Jewish state and polity. This no Protestant will question unless he is prepared to go back to the traditions and fooleries of the dark ages. But enough has been said to show that in denying that he was Elias in the sense the Jews intended, John Baptist did no more than a supreme regard for truth and duty compelled him to do. Let us consider for one moment the third question and answer.

"Art thou *that prophet?* And he answered, No." To what prophet did the Jews refer? On this point commentators have widely differed, some, and Dr. A. Clarke among the rest, have supposed that they had in view the prophet foretold by Moses, (Duet. xviii, 15.) "The Lord thy God shall raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thy brethren like unto me." It seems however, notwithstanding Dr. Clarke denies it, that the Jews in our Savior's time understood this prophecy to relate to the Messiah. The question then would have been identical with the first, (since Messiah and Christ are synonymous,) and was unequivocally answered by John, "I am not the Christ." This prophecy of Moses was likewise by Peter (Acts iii, 22,) applied to the Messiah. Others, with better reason, have supposed that the Jews alluded to one of the old prophets and particularly Jeremiah whom they expected personally to re-appear before the Messiah's advent. This opinion is strengthened by, perhaps founded upon, Matt. xvi, 13, 14. Jesus asked his disciples, saying, "Who say men that I, the Son of man, am?" And they said, some say that thou art John the Baptist; (the sentiment of Herod,) some, Elias, and others *Jeremias*, or one of the prophets." It is said by Dr. Henry, we know not upon what authority, that the Jews expected the prophet Jeremiah before Elijah, as they expected Elijah before the Messiah. And Dr. A. Clarke says, that "the Jews had a tradition that Jeremiah was to return to life, and restore the pot of manna, the ark of the covenant, &c. which he had hidden, that the Babylonians might not get them. Besides this, they had a general expectation that all the prophets should come to life in the days of the Messiah." In 2 Macc. i, 1, it is intimated that Jeremiah also hid the *sacred fire* of the altar. But these are only Jewish fancies. The opinion that it was Jeremiah to whom the Jews referred under the appellation, *that prophet*, is adopted by Beza, Bengel, Chrysostom, and is strongly favored by Rosenmuller, Kuinoel, and other modern commentators. S.

We have copied an article in this day's paper from the N. Y. Evangelist, entitled THE ULTIMATE GOOD. It is from the pen of the Editor, Br. Leavitt. With the exception of one or two phrases, *saving souls* for instance, it meets with our hearty approbation. Happiness, in Br. Leavitt's view, is the ultimate good. Virtue is good, because it promotes happiness. "God exists only to do good." Will Br. Leavitt inform us where he finds room in his system to crowd in the counter doctrine of endless misery? If God exists only to do good, may we ask who will inflict intolerable and ceaseless torment upon an individual of the human race? Endless misery cannot be good. But it must be, if God causes it, for he exists only to do good. Endless misery then, if it be true, must be good to somebody. Will it be good to God? No, for "what makes God righteous is his infinite benevolence," and benevolence "is choosing the 'happiness' of others." It would not be benevolent then, nor righteous for God to make man endlessly miserable for the sake of advancing his own glory or

happiness. Will endless misery be good to him who suffers it? That is impossible and the supposition absurd. Will endless misery be good to the inhabitants of heaven? For if it be true, it must be good to somebody, and the blessed in heaven are the only beings in the universe of God to whom it can be good. If the endless torments of the damned promote the happiness of the heirs of heaven, it seems to us they must have very little of the benevolence of either God, or Jesus Christ, or even of Paul, who would "gladly spend and be spent for the sake of saving souls." No, no, Br. Leavitt, this will not do; if you reason in this manner your own brethren will soon suspect you of Universalism. You must return again to pure Hopkinsianism, and say plainly that, "God will be as much glorified in the *damnation* as in the *salvation* of sinners," and that the happiness of heaven will be increased by the torments of hell. S.

CHOLERA RECORD.

At the request of some of our patrons in the country, we give below a record of the disease from its commencement among us. We adopt the report of the City Inspector, as that gives the extent of deaths, by every disease, and his report of the proportion by Cholera, we doubt not, is entitled to as much confidence as those to the Board of Health. The disease for a week or two past, has been quite fluctuating, though in the aggregate gradually decreasing. Our citizens, we understand, are returning again in great numbers. Our only apprehension is, that inattention will increase the disease. Too much caution cannot be observed by them in food and exercise. With this, we should regard them measurably safe.

Week ending	Burials,	By Cholera	Day end 8 o'clock	Burials,	By Cholera
July 7,	191	56	Aug. 12,	63	34
" 14,	510	336	" 13,	57	36
" 21,	887	716	" 13,	50	33
" 28,	879	686	" 15,	75	27
Aug. 4,	580	383			
" 11,	469	288			

In the Discourse published in the present number, those who heard it delivered may discover some verbal alterations, and a few additions, which were deemed of sufficient importance to justify their insertion. It was desirable that the views entertained by the writer should be as fully expressed as might well be done in a single discourse. If his opinions on the subject are just, he could wish to see them more generally adopted—if erroneous nothing could afford him greater pleasure than to be corrected. S.

* An acknowledgement of the receipt of a series of articles, for the Messenger, from the pen of Br. THOMAS of Philadelphia, should have appeared last week, but was unavoidably omitted. One was inserted in our last, and another will be found in the present number. We hope we may hear from him as often as leisure, and justice to others, will permit.

HUDSON RIVER ASSOCIATION.

THE HUDSON RIVER ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSALISTS will hold its annual session, on the second Wednesday and Thursday of September next at Troy, N. Y.

FAST DISCOURSE.

At the request of several friends who heard the discourse delivered, which will be found in our Paper of this week, we have published an extra Edition, for the accommodation of those who may not be subscribers to the Paper. Such as may desire the discourse can be accommodated, at 50 Cents per dozen or 6 Cents single, on application at this office. PUBLISHER.

A letter to the Editor of the *Trumpet*, from Belpre, Ohio, gives the agreeable information that a Mr. TUTTLE of Fearing, Washington Co., Ohio, has commenced preaching the universal grace of God. He is one of the County Commissioners, and his labors are said to be highly acceptable.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

ILLUSTRATION OF PROV. XXV. 15.

Doctor P., a Quaker of this city, is very kind to the poor. In times of sickness, produced by whatever cause, he is always ready and willing to assist them. His benevolence, in such cases, extends farther than his gratuitous services as a Physician. Of course he is beloved.

Our streets are frequently somewhat crowded with building materials—so much so as often, at particular places, to prevent two vehicles from passing each other, if the driver of either is disposed to be obstinate.

As the Doctor was one day proceeding to visit a patient, his progress was impeded by a dray—the driver of which had stopped his horse in one of those narrow passages. After waiting several minutes, the Doctor requested the drayman to allow him to pass. The latter, who had heard of, but did not know the former, poured forth a volley of the vilest abuse upon the "straight coat," and swore he would not move till he thought proper.

"Well, friend," said the Doctor, "all I have to observe is this: if thee should get sick, or if thy family should ever be in distress, send for Dr. P., and he will do all he can to assist thee."

I need scarcely say that the heart of the drayman was subdued by the kindness of the man he had abused. He was ashamed of his conduct—stammered an apology, and removed the obstruction as speedily as possible.

How true it is, that "a soft tongue breaketh the bone." If the Doctor had cursed the drayman till midnight, he would have received nought but cursing and blows in return.

This may be thought a small matter; but it furnishes a useful lesson to which it would be well were Christians uniformly to attend.

Philadelphia. A. C. T.

THE ULTIMATE GOOD.

While some of our correspondents, as well as writers in some papers, are engaged in discussions on this subject, we shall not perhaps be accused of improper interference if we make one or two suggestions.

1. What is *virtue*? Answer, benevolence. That is, good will, or choosing the "happiness" of others. This is right. It is right in God. What makes him righteous is his infinite benevolence. "God is love." That is, his benevolence is so predominant and so intense, that it may be said to make up his whole character, and even to constitute his being. He exists only to do good. The same thing is right in creatures. In proportion as they are benevolent or love to do good, they are like God. Benevolence may become so predominant and so intense in them, as to occupy their whole souls, to absorb as it were, their very being. Then they are fully transferred into the image of God. And it is right they should be so.

2. What is *benevolence*? It is by free choice placing one's happiness in doing good. It is loving to do good, or taking our highest pleasure in endeavoring to promote the happiness of others. The choice of doing good is nothing more nor less than being pleased to do good. The satisfaction God takes in doing good is the same thing with his choice to do good, or his benevolence. We can conceive of no better sort of benevolence than that exercised by Paul, when he would "gladly spend and be spent" for the sake of saving souls; and by Jesus Christ when "for the joy that was set before him," i.

e. the good he would do by it, he undertook the great work of redeeming sinners; and by God himself, when he "so loved the world as to give his only begotten son." This is right. There is no higher virtue than this, when a being finds not merely his highest happiness, but as it were his whole happiness, in doing good.

3. What is the ultimate good? Answer, it is that concerning which you cannot rationally ask what it is good for. We can ask this question respecting all the *means* and sources of happiness. But we cannot ask it respecting happiness itself. Excepting indeed as the happiness of one being may be a means of happiness to another. No other thing is good, excepting as a means to this end. Food is good in the first place because it removes the pain of hunger, then because it gratifies the sense of taste, further because it strengthens the body for doing good, and finally, because it may serve as a motive to the benevolent feeling of gratitude to the Giver of good. In all these ways it is good, just so far as it is a means of happiness. Virtue is good, because it promotes happiness. It is good to him who exercises it, because it causes him the highest possible happiness. It is good to others, because it leads him to promote their happiness. It is good to the universe, because it not only promotes their happiness, but also leads them to the choice of doing good to each other. Suppose virtue did not promote happiness, what would it be good for? Would a man be under any obligation to it, if it did not good, i. e. if it did not promote happiness, in himself and others?—N. Y. Evangelist.

Prospectus for the Second Volume of the
CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.
Devoted to the Doctrine of Universal Benevolence
the defence of Liberal Principles, generally,
in Religion, and miscellaneous reading,
of chaste and moral tendency.

In presenting our friends with proposals for publishing the Second Volume of the *Christian Messenger*, few observations will be necessary in explanation of its objects, and those few cannot, perhaps, be better expressed than in the language of the prospectus for the first volume. "Its primary design is to 'plead the cause' of a slandered and persecuted denomination of Christians, (the Universalists)—to illustrate and enforce their principles, and defend firmly, though as far as possible, with christian candor, their doctrine from the opprobrium which even professing christians endeavor, too readily, to fasten upon it; and in thus defending its own, it will advocate the civil and religious rights of all. Professing a sentiment which recognizes the Almighty as our common Father, and mankind as brethren indeed, it can know no exclusive privileges. Whatever it may ask for itself, it asks for ALL."

In commencing the *Messenger*, we pledged the publication of one volume at least. That pledge is now nearly redeemed. As we have no wish to commence the Second Volume only under similar conditions, we thus early call on our Patrons for an expression of their opinion on our past labors, by showing us whether they are willing to journey on with us yet another year, should our lives be spared, and how far they can strengthen our hands by additional subscriptions. We have little apology to offer for the course of the Paper. We have endeavored to do the best in our power. That seeming severity may have marked its pages at times, we do not deny. Though whenever energetic or decisive language has appeared to us necessary, we have endeavored to practice it in candor and good will—to make our work, as was expressed in the introduction, as far as possible a Christian Message to its readers. How far

we have attained this object, our Patrons will now determine, in sustaining the work or rejecting it altogether. We should be gratified in continuing the acquaintance so agreeably commenced, if it can be done with profit to them, and with justice to ourselves. A considerable accession to our list, however, will be necessary in view of the latter. On the present volume, the labors of the senior Editor (and he has not been idle, as our columns will abundantly testify) have been wholly gratuitous. If continued, he will need and deserve a compensation. Shall we be enabled to make it? Patrons therefore will please signify to us their intention as early as possible, and also make exertions for additional support. We particularly request this favor of them. It is necessary we should know our probable reliance, a reasonable time before the close of the first volume, (which will be the last Saturday in October,) that we may make calculations accordingly. A trifling exertion, individually, among them, will effect it.

TERMS.—The *Messenger* will be published every Saturday, on a royal sheet, quarto form, close print, at Two Dollars per annum, in advance, or Two Dollars and Fifty Cents if not paid within six months from time of subscribing. Letters to be addressed, post paid, "P. Price, 85 1/2 Bowery, New-York."

P. PRICE, PUBLISHER.

DIED,

In Newtown, Conn. on the 9th inst. Mrs. Lucy Ann, consort of Mr. Oliver Summers, aged 23 years. In the death of Mrs. S. a kind husband is bereft of an amiable wife; three little children, of a fond mother; a large circle of friends, of a pattern of virtue and humility; and the Universalist Society in Newtown of an ornament. The benevolent sentiment that she had long advocated, both by precept and purity of life, and which had warmed her bosom and cherished her virtues, she found a constant friend to the last. The writer of this tendered to the mourners the consolations of the gospel from Phil i, 21, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

I should not forget to mention that among her numerous connexions is our aged Br. Solomon Glover. It is known to most of our order that this father in Israel has long been an indefatigable advocate of the doctrine of God's universal efficient grace. It must be a consolation to him, that the light he has been instrumental in drawing from the sacred testimony, has shed such a radiance around the minds of his posterity, that his grand child has been led to repose sweet confidence in her Savior, and die in peace.

August 13, 1832. S. J. H.

LETTERS AND REMITTANCES,

Received at this office, ending August 15th.

S. L. H. Cairo, for Z. N. Gayhead, \$2; Rev. R. S. Middletown; P. M. Green Hill, Ga; I. S. Beekman, (his request will be complied with as soon as the sickness abates;) Rev. S. J. H. New Haven; B. B. H. Middle Island, L. I.; R. B. G. Milford, Ct; D. B. K. 50 cents and W. I. B. \$1 Brooklyn; B. I. H. Rondout, P. O. N. Y. \$2; Z. P. and S. J. Bethel, each \$1; A. B. T. Stamford, \$1; C. P. P. Durham; Rev. A. C. T. Philadelphia; S. W. Washington City, D. C.

RELIGIOUS NOTICE.

Br. Andrews appoints to preach in Collinsville on next Sunday, (the 19th;) at Winstead, on Sunday, the 26th; and at Wallings Hill at 5 o'clock, P. M. same day; at New Marlborough, Mass. on Monday afternoon, (the 27th,) at 5 o'clock, P. M.; at Winchester Centre, on Tuesday evening, the 28th; and at New Haven on the first Sunday of September on exchange with Br. Fisk, who will preach on that day at Wettoville.

FROM THE FORGET-ME-NOT FOR 1832.

THE THUNDER-STORM.

"Fear not, thy God is with thee."

It comes!—the rushing wind has burst
The silence and the weight which nurst
Its gathering strength; deep as the tomb,
One heavy cloud sweepin in gloom;
A few faint gleams of broken light—
A streak of blue—all else is night!
Not the soft light of moon and star,
But's made by elements at war.
A human step is on the heath—
A child that bears a wild-flower wreath;
Wild o'er the mountains howls the wind;
The morn's fair vale is far behind;
She is alone; her large blue eye
Turns timid to the awful sky;
The innocent, the loved, the young,
To whom the widow's heart has clung;
The dear remainder of the past,
On whom all future hope is cast,
Guarded by all thy mother's tears,
Sweet orphan, shake from thee thy fears;
Tremble to mark God's might above,
Tremble and cheer thy dread with love!
Though dark the tempest o'er thy head,
Not this the tempest thou shouldst dread—
Dread thou the storms of coming time
Must mingle with thine hour of prime—
The tempests of the heart, which none,
However they subdue, may shun.
The feverish hope, the vain desire,
Env, repentance, grief, and ire,
The trust deceived, the faith betray'd,
The wrong that only Heaven can aid:
These wait for all, and these must be
A portion of thy life and thee.
Ah! when in after years, if care
Or toil seem more than thou canst bear;
And sleepless night, and anxious day,
Wear life in heaviness away;
Think thou amid thy weary lot,
How this storm passed and harm'd thee not:
The Hand that kept the wind-swept hill
And lonely moor is with thee still,
The same to save, the same to spare,
Let thy lip guard its early prayer.
Thy wrongs are register'd on high,
Thy tears a holy hope shall dry,
Thy toil meet harvest will return,
Thy grief is as the fires that burn.
And purity, if that thy heart
Has kept its early faith apart:
If thou canst raise a heavenward brow
As trustingly as thou dost now;
If meekness faith and piety
Can say—Thy God is still with thee.

A SUMMER EVENING.

It has long been debatable ground, we believe, with poets, whether morning or evening is the best fitted for contemplation, which of them show forth most of the beauties of nature, and which presents the highest theme for the flight of their muse. We leave them to settle the question. But we must confess the time when is " tolled the knell of parting day"—when

"The lowing herds wind slowly o'er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness—"

is peculiarly grateful to our feelings. The mind is elevated at the sight of, and there is majesty in, the uprising of the sun, when he comes forth from the chambers of the east, and "goes as a giant, rejoicing to run his race." There is beauty, too, in the harmony and concord of sweet sounds warbled from the throats of the feathered songsters, there is joy in the breath of flowers, and loveliness in the face of the earth spangled with dew drops: But all these bring not the same soothing calmness, the same mild luxury to the heart and feelings, as the sight and sound incident to the evening. More especially are the summer evenings in our climate beautiful and delightful. The air is fragrant and balsmy—the hum of the day gradually sinks into silence, the skies are streaked with grey and golden clouds, while innumerable fire-flies, rising from

the grass, emit their phosphorus light athwart the "shades of evening"—Nature's own little torch-bearers. The holy tranquillity of the time, too, suits the contemplative mind more than any other. We learn then emphatically to "look through Nature up to Nature's God," for there is nothing to steal away the soul, or distract its meditations.

Evening is the proper time to view the works of Art as well as Nature—especially architectural grandeur and decay. A rich mellowness is imparted to marble columns and granite pillars—"Hues which have words, and speak to ye of heaven. Float o'er the vast and wondrous monument, And shadow forth its glory."

And when the destroyer has "leaned his hand, but broke his scythe" upon these proud trophies of man's genius, it is sweet to linger among their ruins and watch the

"Stars twinkling through the loops of time," and listen

"As the low night breeze waives along the air,
The garland-forest, which the grey walls wear,
Like laurels on the bald first Cesar's head."

The town is no place to enjoy the pleasures of a summer evening. You must leave the busy haunts of men, and go into the retirement of the country. We do not think, with North's shepherd, that a man can be as good and happy in the streets and alleys of a city, as in the sprinkled domicils that from the green earth look up through the trees to heaven. Cowper says, "Man made the town, God the country;" and perhaps a happier illustration of the idea could not be found than the enjoyment of such an evening as we have attempted to describe.

—*Alexandria Gazette.*

TO YOUNG LADIES.

To you, my young friends, I would address myself, in the language of deep and earnest interest. You are now at that delightful period of life, which is like spring among the seasons, redolent of beauty and freshness, and giving fair promise of the rich fruits of maturer years. Take heed the young blossoms be not blighted. Call to mind the countless advantages which have been bestowed on you—reflect upon the anxious solicitude of the fathers who wait to see you the object of their pride, as well as the sources of their happiness—remember the cares, the exertions, the almost heart-breaking anxiety of the mothers who have guided your infant feet to the threshold of the temple of knowledge, and then press forward "in the race set before you." You are entering upon a noble career. The pure, and elevated, and holy duties which are peculiarly a woman's will soon claim your undivided attention. Let me pray you, therefore, so to discipline your hearts, so to cultivate your minds, so to purify your spirits, now, during the unbroken leisure of youth, that the hour of trial may find you "with your lamps trimmed and burning." You have begun well—go on then in the same course, and remember that

"of those to whom much is given, much will be required;" and that genius and knowledge while they lay claim to the highest honors which men bestow, also bear with them the highest responsibilities both to God and man. Science is now opening to you her richest stores of honor, and usefulness; and the prayers of parents and friends are following you, when you are utterly unconscious of them. Pause then—in the cool freshness of the morning of life, before you wax faint in the noonday heats—pause and form for yourselves the noble resolutions which should direct your future life. Look back through the shadowy vista of past years, and behold what are the foundations of the most lasting honors of men. Look forward with the eye of faith, to the glories of the promised land; and while you weigh well the different results of moral

conduct, take heed that you "keep your hearts with all diligence, for out of them are the issues of life." Form your taste on the classics, and your principles on the book of all truth. Let the dawn of your being be hallowed by that pure devotion, which is ever an offering of a "sweet smelling savor" to the bounteous giver of all good. Let the first fruits of your intellect be laid before the altar of *Him* who breathed into your nostrils the breath of life, and with that breath your immortal spirit: and while your life furnishes the most striking illustration of the benefits of education, let it be your care to persevere unto the end that it may be said of each, in her own peculiar sphere, "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all."—*Mrs. Embury.*

PROSPECTUS OF THE
GOSPEL WITNESS.

The undersigned proposes to publish in the city of HARTFORD, Conn. a new periodical of the above title, as an efficient co-operator with other valuable Journals, in support and defence of the principles of *Universalists*. The aim of the Editor shall be to lend his aid in correcting the numerous misrepresentations which constantly issue from the pulpit and the press, in regard to the *faith* of the religious denomination to which he belongs—and to present a full exposition of the peculiar sentiments of the order, and the 'reasons for the hope' entertained, of the final and blessed 'restitution of all things.' At a time when the whole artillery of *limitarian* opposition is directed, for the overthrow of what we believe to be Primitive Christianity, with which are connected the dearest hopes of a large class of this community, it will not, we trust, be out of place to solicit the patronage of a liberal people, to yet another publication, in this State, which shall be pledged to the propagation of the principles of sound morality, simple truth, and universal benevolence.

TERMS.—The *WITNESS* will be published every Wednesday, each number containing four large quarto pages, at \$1.50 per annum, or \$1.25 in advance. Agents advancing \$10, shall receive nine copies, or twenty copies for \$20.

L. F. W. ANDREWS.

Hartford, Conn. July 1832.

TO UNIVERSALISTS.

MARSH, CAPE & LYON, Boston, keep constantly for sale, aside from their general assortment of Books and STATIONARY, a large assortment of

UNIVERSALIST BOOKS,
Wholesale and Retail.

M. C. & L. have made arrangements to receive every publication, interesting to the sect, as soon as published, and intend their store as a GENERAL DEPOSITORY FOR UNIVERSALIST PUBLICATIONS, from every part of the United States. They will continue to publish such Books, PAMPHLETS, SERMONS, CATECHISMS, TRACTS, as may be considered valuable, and they would respectfully request AUTHORS to communicate to them their wishes and designs.

Publishers of Universalist Works are requested to forward some of each of their publications as soon as out of the press, and all proper exertions shall be made to extend the sale of them. As M. C. & L. have long been established in the Publishing and Bookselling business—they have every facility for supplying either FOREIGN or AMERICAN Books at the lowest prices and with despatch. Orders for Foreign Books are sent on the 1st and 15th of every month.

All letters and communications relating to this paper, must be addressed "P. Price, No. 85½ Bowery, New-York."

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